

Promoting Healthy Marriage

New Resources to Strengthen Families and Prevent Out-of-Wedlock Births

Research clearly shows that children do best when raised by married parents.

- A child raised by a never-married mother is seven times more likely to live in poverty than a child raised by both biological parents in an intact marriage. Overall, some 80 percent of long-term child poverty in the United States is found among children from broken or never-formed families.
- Children raised by single parents are five times more likely to depend on welfare and twice as likely to commit crimes or go to jail.

Research shows that unmarried parents understand the importance of marriage for their children and view marriage in a positive light.

- More than three-fifths of unmarried parents believe that children are better off if parents are married, and many believe they would be happier if they were married.
- The vast majority of unmarried parents (82 percent) are in some type of romantic relationship at the time their child is born. The vast majority of cohabiting unmarried mothers (83 percent) believe their chances of marrying the father of their child are pretty good/almost certain.
- Some types of assistance for fragile families could benefit children.

The *Deficit Reduction Act of 2005* provides \$100 million in each of fiscal years 2006 - 2010 for research and demonstration projects to test promising approaches to encourage healthy marriages.

- Welfare programs offer cash and other benefits to women who have children outside marriage, often at very young ages. In 2004, 10 percent of children lived in families headed by never-married single moms; that compares with 5 percent in 1982. Eighty-two percent of teen mothers bore children outside marriage in 2003.
- Grants to promote healthy marriage will support activities to reverse the devastating trend of out-of-wedlock births. These activities include marriage education, marriage skills training, public advertising campaigns, high school education on the value of marriage, and marriage mentoring programs.
- Grant applicants must describe how programs will address issues of domestic violence and must ensure participation in these programs is voluntary.